MISCELLANEOUS TRACTS

OF THE

Rev. JOHN CLUBBE,

RECTOR of WHATFIELD,

And VICAR of DEBENHAM, SUFFOLK.

In two VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

A Letter of Free Advice to a Young Clergyman, 2d. Edition.

A Sermon Preached before the Sons of the Clergy at IPSWICH, SUFFOLK, 2d. Edit.

INFANT BAPTISM conſidered under the great probability, if not abſolute certainty, of its practice in the firſt Ages of Chriſtianity.

——— *Amoto quæramus ſeria ludo.* ——— HOR.

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A LETTER OF FREE ADVICE TO A Young Clergyman.

VOL II.

If ever there be a Publick Reformation amongſt us, it muſt begin at the Houſe of God; and they who are the Miniſters of Religion, muſt lead on this work; and be more careful and conſciencious in the diſcharge of that high and holy office, which is committed to them by the great Shepherd and Biſhop of Souls.

Archbiſhop TILLOTSON.

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ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

READER.

THIS Letter was at firſt drawn up for the uſe of a private friend; who, with ſome others, thinking it might poſſibly be of more general ſervice,

prevailed upon the author to make it public.

It comes out much in the ſame form it was originally plann'd. The author has little alter'd, added to, or taken from it; except by correcting ſome errors that had eſcaped obſervation; and by leaving out ſome references to books, which he has recommended to his friend. This, as well as to avoid the imputation of dictating, as out of

of deference to men of better judgment, who may think of others more proper.

The author wiſh'd, and ſtill hopes to ſee all the parts of this ſubject (which now lie detach'd in ſome excellent *Epiſcopal* charges) brought under one view by an abler hand; but thinks, in caſes of neceſſity, as at a fire, the weakeſt engine may be of uſe till better help comes; and that he is a bad citizen, who ſtands

ſtill, and refuſes his aſſiſt-ance, becauſe, perhaps, he has not ſo much ſkill as others in putting it out. And upon this ſingle motive he ventures to publiſh his *own* thoughts upou it.

The author makes no a-pology for his freedom; they, who, *feel* from it, may eaſily remove the oc-caſion: To effect which is the ſole aim of this pub-lication.

Dear

Dear Sir,

IF age and experience were always productive of wiſdom, you certainly judged right in aſking my advice, who have a great ſhare of both; for, on this ſea of life, the man, who lives to make the moſt voyages, ſtands the beſt chance of diſcovering the rocks and ſands that lie concealed in it. But the misfortune is, ſome men keep no journals at all, others will not be ſo kind to let us

us peruſe theirs, and others have not humanity enough to drop a cautionary buoy for the benefit of the next adventures; as if they had an intereſt in the wreck, or took pleaſure in ſeeing men drown. Old-age oftentimes looks no farther backward than to the funeral of it's paſt pleaſures, nor forward beyond it's crutches; and experience itſelf is frequently unaccompanied with obſervation and reflexion.

Whether my life has run out in the ſame careleſs and ungenerous manner, the following hints concerning your future conduct will ſhew; and at the worſt prove (though not to your advantage, or my own credit) that

I have made one juſt obſervation in my life, which is, that wiſdom is not always the reſult of age and experience.

In this undertaking I do not propoſe to trace out minutely all the particulars of the *paſtoral care* (that is already done by an eminent hand) but to guard you againſt ſome errors which you may be inconſiderately drawn into by the examples of too many of your brethren. Neither do I mean to be over-rigorous in my advice: for, though I would not have you conform to the evil cuſtoms and manners of the world, I do not deſire to make a *Simeon Stylites* of you, and place you upon a pillar of mortification

tification and deriſion. Nor, on the other hand, do I mean to be ludicrous, where I ſeem rather to laugh at ſome follies; when there is no other way of expoſing them, ridicule itſelf is philoſophy.

You tell me you are now in *full orders*, and think you could manage a good rectory with a little of my aſſiſtance.--I believe you could without it, as well as any one of your years; but excuſe me if I do not deſire to ſee you poſſeſſed of one at preſent. When preferment comes very early in life, I have ſeen many a riſing genius ruined by it; ſome men taking into a life of pleaſure, others into an eaſy chair

chair of ſleep and indolenee, and others into ſordidneſs and illiberality of mind: ſo that books ſtand upon their ſhelves like mural monuments in ſome of our churches covered over with duſt, to record the idleneſs and ſloth of their departed readers, as the other the forgetfulneſs and diſreſpect of their ſurviving friends.

Some knowledge alſo of mankind is abſolutely neceſſary; which cannot be acquired but by ſlow and gradual obſervation; for without it, you cannot know when to *exhort*, *admoniſh*, or *reprove* in *due Seaſon*; neither can you know how to manage your temporal affairs with due propriety, upon which your own eaſe,

eaſe, and your weight with others much depend: for there is a certain fitneſs of addreſs and application, that muſt be nicely attended to, if you would do good to others, and be happy yourſelf.

For theſe reaſons be content upon a curacy for two or three years, the income of which will hardly tempt you into any of the evils already mentioned, and afford you time to ſtudy books and men without worldly interruptions: the latter perhaps moſt profitably at ſecond hand (unleſs you ſhould be fortunately placed indeed) by reading ſome of our beſt hiſtorians, and biographers.

Your

Your acquiſitions in human learning, I grant, are already very conſiderable, but here you are not to reſt; for theſe are but preliminaries, and hitherto you have been doing little more than laying the foundation of ſome larger pile, which is to be carried up and finiſhed according to the rank and profeſſion of the owner. Divinity is your ſuperſtructure; to compleat which you muſt conſtantly read the Holy ſcriptures. Let all your mornings be ſpent in this ſtudy: compare ſimilar paſſages together, and they will generally explain one another. Upon any difficulty conſult our beſt commentators, but never ſit down

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to read them ſervilely with the text. Read church-hiſtorians, antiquarians, *&c.*

Be ready to give a *reaſon of the hope* that is in you, in oppoſition to the ſophiſms and ſceptical quibbles, with which infidels attack our holy religion. You will wonder, perhaps, that the champions of this cauſe ſhould rally again, after the many defeats they have met with: but ceaſe your aſtoniſhment! change of dreſs in argument, as well as in perſon, ſometimes gives a plauſible appearance to both, though it alters the ſubſtance of neither; and from this deception, every ſpecious pen dipped in the gall of bitterneſs, is brandiſhed

diſhed as a new invincible weapon in the hands of infidelity.----To combat with every phantom of objection is indeed a vexatious taſk, but it muſt be gone through, if we would approve ourſelves Chriſt's faithful ſoldiers and ſervants. For in our ſpiritual warfare, men judge of the goodneſs of our cauſe by the abilities of the defenders of it; and a victory over an ignorant preacher of the goſpel, is looked upon as a conqueſt and triumph over chriſtianity itſelf.

Look carefully into the controverſy betwixt proteſtants and papiſts; as irrational and abſurd as many of the doctrines of the latter are, yet their indulgences

and

and abſolution, like the bread of deceit, are ſweet to the palate, though, afterward, they fill the mouth with gravel; for it is much eaſier to purchaſe a warrant of pardon, than to tread the rugged paths of repentance to obtain it. There are alſo ſome external circumſtances, ſuch as the juggle of miracles, proceſſions, *&c.* to aſtoniſh and confound the mind, and make it the more ſucceptible of the impoſture.

Acquaint yourſelf with the tenets of the proteſtant diſſenters of all denominations, that you may be always able to defend your own, and ſatisfy the ſcruples of others. But avoid all paſſionate

ate and rancorous invectives; bring no railing accuſations againſt them. Let us hope and pray that there will ſoon be a time, when we ſhall be one fold, as we are all under one ſhepherd.

At church be ſerious and devout; remember that your are not praying unto men, but to the great God of heaven and earth: the thoughts of his preſence will baniſh every object of diſſipation. Read ſolemnly and diſtinctly, and, though you be not bleſt with a loud, or a muſical voice, yet you will be heard. In the pulpit let your deportment be neither theatrical nor ſtiff: be not like a puppet upon the ſtage, nor like one

painted on the canvaſs. Much action, and more noiſe, diſtinguiſhed the prieſts of *Baal*, but, we have no ſuch example left us by the meek and humble *Jeſus*. Let your ſermons be plain, and your language ſcriptural: when you quote a text of ſcripture by way of proof, name the chapter and verſe: when by way of illuſtration, I think you need not. Meddle not with controverſial ſubjects, unleſs upon a very extraordinary occaſion.---If you are much admired by the vulgar, ſuſpect your compoſitions, and endeavour to make them better.

Be punctual to the ſeaſons of adminiſtring the Lord's-ſupper: by *ſeaſons* I mean thoſe greater feſti-

feſtivals, which to the ſhame of too many chriſtians, are the only days that can *now* be celebrated with the *Euchariſt* in many of our churches. Wherever you happen to be placed, be ſure not to abate of, but endeavour to promote a greater frequency of it, by a ſet of ſermons upon the ſubject; in ſome encouraging the timorous, and confirming the doubtful; in others ſetting forth the ſuitable habits and preparation for it; and in all, the neceſſity of frequently receiving it.

In the adminiſtration of publick baptiſm (if you perform this office on any days but ſundays or holidays) make no difference betwixt the rich and the poor. Is

one day more convenient than another for the one, ſo it may be for the poor man? does the one expect his relations and friends, ſo does the other? it may indeed be more convenient for the latter to chuſe his day: he cannot at all times, get ſponſors; his ſponſors cannot, at all times, leave their labour; nor can he at all times, be provided to receive them,---for the due adminiſtration of this ſacrament, as alſo of the other of the Lord's Supper, I refer you to the *Rubrics*, and *Office*, themſelves.

Be careful to catechiſe the children in your pariſh: inſtill early principles of religion into their minds: They perhaps may after-

wards aſſiſt in diſpelling that cloud of ignorance, prophaneneſs, and immorality that now overſpreads us; at leaſt, they may learn to ſhun that wickedneſs, which the world, and too often their own parents encourage by their examples. This care will regularly train them up for *Confirmation*; and ſurely be much better than that hurried and technical preparation, which is too often the caſe, upon notice of an *Epiſcopal* viſitation.

At the ſolemnization of matrimony, diſcountenance that levity, with which the perſons that come to be married, and their friends generally appear before us; and by our own grave deport-

deportment ſhew, that they are to behave reverently, and in the fear of God. For with whatever proſpect of worldly happineſs the two perſons may come to be joined together, the church is not the place for external marks of their joy. Nor indeed ſhould any of our paſſions there appear in their natural garb; but be purified and exalted, when we are in the immediate preſence of Almighty God!----To encourage matrimony, (which is one great cement of ſociety) be favourable in your fees, if you take any of the poorer people: I ſay if you *take any*; for certainly to return them is a publick good, as well as an act of private charity

charity that can be of little injury to ourſelves: for, as ſuch fees are altogether caſual, they cannot be anticipated into the eſtimate of our annual incomes, and expences: and it is pity, prodigality ſhould laviſh, or avarice hoard up, what is inconſiderable to us, but of certain advantage to virtue and ſociety, by promoting matrimony amongſt the lower ſort of people.

But I do not mean that others be *eaſed*, and you *burthened*; for if your income (as many do) depends much upon ſurplice-fees, you certainly ought to take them to the full extent, that cuſtom permits It is the misfortune of many of us to have our main-

tenance ariſe from trifling articles, and thoſe very often among the poor people; ſo that we are forced to take, where we ſhould be glad to give: to collect them hurts our minds, and not to collect them ſtarves us; and what aggravates our unhappineſs is that the ſmallneſs of our demands upon individuals, makes exaction of them ſeem oppreſſive; ſo that while we are lamenting our hard fate, for depending upon ſuch little things, others are for that very reaſon condemning our hard hearts for looking after them. It would be particularly happy for poor vicars, if ſome equivalent could be thought of, that would exempt them from the very low

ſcenes

ſcenes of traffick they are now often obliged to engage in; not only (almoſt literally) to eaſe their ſhoulders from the burthen, but to take off that weight upon their minds, with which, from the nature, as well as narrowneſs of their incomes, many of them are frequently embarraſſed. But I hope your lot will fall on better ground.

In viſiting the ſick be punctual, and make no diſtinction; but ſee the poor ſick man as regularly, and ſtay as long as with his rich ſick neighbour. He will indeed, on ſome accounts, want your aſſiſtance moſt: for the rich have many friends, and every cordial to alleviate their

pains;

pains; but the poor man is ſeparated from his neighbour, and has no officious hand to adminiſter ſuch palliations. Him you have to inſtruct, not only to bear ſickneſs, but poverty: Each of them ſingly uncomfortable enough, but jointly, without the aids of religion, intolerable.--- Let not the affectation of ſpirits too tender to ſee miſery, or the ſuggeſtions of falſe delicacy againſt the coarſe, and ſometimes uncleanly dreſs, in which it is wrapped up, retard you one moment from entering upon this duty, or make you hurry over the particulars of it.

In the burial of the dead inſiſt upon timely notice of the hour;

hour; that you may previonſly think of your own mortality, and not walk through the valley of death, with the indifference of an haſty traveller, that thinks not of coming that way again.--Carry not a rich man into the church, and read over him the whole burial-ſervice, and huddle a poor man into his grave with a ſmall portion of it. Conſider they are both equal now, for death has deſtroyed the diſtinction.---Whenever there is a congregation on theſe occaſions, whether it conſiſts of rich or poor, be ſure to read that noble lecture of St. *Paul* appointed in the burial-office.---The united

force of the ſubject, his reaſoning, and the ſublimity of his ſtyle tranſports us as it were to the laſt ſcene of things, we hear the ſound of the trumpet, we feel this corruptible putting on incorruption, and this mortal putting on immortality!

The office of churching of women recommends, and is an hearty thankſgiving to God, for preſerving them in the great danger of child-birth. But this acknowlegment, I am afraid, is frequently omitted, from an utter inability to raiſe, or ſpare the accuſtomed fee, though it be but ſixpence. This offering, which is now converted into a fee to the miniſter, I take to have

have been the offering they were to make at the communion, and an immediate oblation to God only; and ſhould be given to the poor, whom his bleſſed ſon has deputed his repreſentatives here on earth; and therefore ſhould be remitted, when one of that claſs comes to return thanks.

I muſt not omit a remark or two upon the *Rubric*, placed immediately after the *Nicene* creed; where firſt it is ſaid, 'then the curate ſhall declare 'unto the people what holidays 'or faſting-days are in the week 'following to be obſerved.'---- From hence I infer the duty of reading prayers upon all ſuch days: for though it might mean

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to prevent the keeping ſuperſti-tious days, yet 'to be obſerved,' certainly implies the religious obſervation of thoſe days; and that cannot be ſo properly done as by publick prayers. In many pariſhes I grant, it is difficult to aſſemble any number of people upon ſuch occaſions: but it will be very hard indeed if you cannot make ſuch a congregation as Chriſt will accept of, who has promiſed that where two or three are gathered together in his name, there will he be in the midſt of them.----Before I quit this *Rubric*, I muſt add my wiſhes, that the latter part of it could be cloſely kept up to; which prohibits 'the proclaim-

'ing

'ing or publiſhing any thing 'during the time of divine ſervice, 'but by the miniſter, *&c.*' At preſent, thank God, notice is not given of horſe-races and cock-fights; but many things are there proclaimed, as little edifying to the congregation; ſuch as *Court-Barons*, *Court-Leets*, *ſcouring of Ditches*, *cutting of Hedges*, &c. I do not deſire to ſuppreſs theſe publications, but think they might be as uſefully made in the church-yard after the people are diſmiſſed; where the blundering pariſh-clerk may be more decently laughed at (which is generally the caſe) than in the houſe of God.

In

In your viſits to your pariſhoners (with whom be ſure to be acquainted) be courteous and affable; converſe with freedom, but avoid all ruſticity and coarſeneſs of expreſſion. Be familiar upon the common topicks of converſation, but never upon any that have the leaſt tendency to idleneſs and folly.---Convert every favourable incident into an eaſy intimation of their duty, and at all times ſhew a readineſs to ſerve them in their temporal affairs, and they will be the more ready to follow your advice in their ſpiritual; for when they are once convinced of the ſincerity of our regard and love for them (and outward pledges are

the

the beſt teſtimonies of it) they will hear us with attention, and we ſhall not preach, and labour in vain.

After this ſerious detail of your parochial duties, excuſe me if I deſcend to matters of ſmaller moment; but yet ſuch as contribute to hold up, or ſink the clerical character.--See that your church, books, and veſtments be kept clean, and in order: a dirty church, a filthy ſurplice, and a tattered hood, are the greateſt marks of indifference and diſreſpect to that being, whom we meet to worſhip.---- Do no office in the church upon any occaſion without a *band*, nor on ſundays, without a *Gown* and

Caſſock, if your diſtance, and the weather will permit; nor think it a trifling correctneſs to keep a *Beaver-Hat* and *Roſe* to wear with your habit. In all ages of the world, and in more than one profeſſion, certain veſtments have been conſtantly uſed in office, as awful enſigns of the dignity and importance of it.

In your undreſs, let me adviſe you to keep to that *colour*, which cuſtom and good men have appointed, as moſt ſuitable to your ſtation, and not run into *motley mixtures*. A dangling crape hat-band from a gold-laced hat makes not a more ridiculous appearance, than *white waiſtcoats* and *white ſtockings* on a clergyman:

man: and after all, for want of ruffles, you will not be taken for a man of an higher, if of ſo high a rank as you really are, of yourſelf. So that you may loſe, and certainly can gain nothing by affecting the lay-man.----Wear always a *full wigg*, as well out, as in your habit; and not *one* that *ſcarce covers your ears*; the latter looks, at beſt, as if it had been in a fray, and came off with no inconſiderable loſs. And if this ſuggeſts ſuch ludicrous ideas, how ridiculous muſt the owner himſelf appear!---Neither wear your own hair, till age has made it venerable; or if you do, let cleanlineſs alone be your hair-dreſſer: for the modern *friſures*

are but preternatural excreſcences, for want of a due circulation of the underſtanding; and can at beſt but make us *Petit-Maitres*; a character compoſed of the affectation of both ſexes ſo blended together, that we ſee not the diſtinctive qualities of either.---Neither come into that *Jewiſh* faſhion of wearing a ſkirting of beard round the face; in *them* it may be proper enough, but with us, openneſs of countenance is the characteriſtic of an ingenuous mind.---But to return to the more general purport of this letter.

You will not be long in the dependent ſtate of a curate, before the *living-brokers* will find out

out you have ſome fortunes, and will be hovering about you; but ſhun them as you would the plague; for they come to pick your pocket of your purſe, and your breaſt of your conſcience.--Biſhop *Gibſon* ſays, that 'the 'moſt plain and direct *Simony* is, 'when the church is become 'void (by *death* or *reſignation*) 'and the void turn, or the pro-'curing of it is contracted for; 'though there be many other 'kinds of unlawful contracts, '*&c.*'; and allows of none but in the caſe of minors.---Now let me lay before you *firſt* the temporal, and *ſecondly* the ſpiritual hazards you will run in dealing with theſe men. The ſtatute of

31 of *Eliz.* c. 6. enacts, 'that 'the patron who receives any 'ſum of money for a preſenta- 'tion or collation, ſhall forfeit 'his turn, and the benefice or 'dignity ſhall lapſe to the crown; 'and that thoſe who either take 'or make any ſuch *ſimonical* 'promiſe, grant, bond, covenant, 'or other aſſurance, ſhall forfeit 'the double value of any ſuch 'benefice, dignity, *&c.* and the 'perſon corruptly procuring or 'accepting any ſuch benefice, 'dignity, *&c.* is forever diſabled 'from enjoying it by any other 'title. And if any perſon ſhall 'receive any ſum of money or 'other benefit for *reſigning* any 'benefice with cure of ſouls,

both

'both the giver and receiver, are 'to forfeit the double value of 'the ſum given.' By the *civil* and *canon* law, he who is privy, or party to the *ſimony*, ſhall be deprived of that, and be forever diſabled to accept any other benefice. Thus the benefice is void as to the patron, who loſes his right of patronage *pro hâc vice*. It is void as to the ordinary, for he is bound to admit the king's preſentee. It is void as to the clerk, without a declaratory ſentence, even tho' he was not privy to it: and it is void as to the pariſhoners: for if the parſon ſues for tithes, they may plead that he is not incumbent; nay, they may be anſwer-

able to the next *legal* incumbent, for all the tythes they paid to the *ſimonical* parſon. And this circumſtance ſurely will alarm the latter, and excite their endeavours to detect ſuch illegal practices.

Secondly, let me lay before you the ſpiritual hazards attending *Simony*; which will appear from the following *oath* that every clerk is obliged to take at his inſtitution. 'I *A. B.* do 'ſwear that I have made no *ſi-* 'monical payment, contract, or 'promiſe, directly or indirectly, 'by myſelf or by any other, to 'my knowledge or with my 'conſent to any perſon or perſons 'whatſoever, for, or concerning

'the

'the procuring or obtaining of 'M. Nor will at any time here-'after perform or ſatisfy any ſuch 'kind of payment, contract, or 'promiſe made by any other with-'out my knowledge or conſent. 'So help me God!' now, what caſuiſtry or equivocations can exempt the clerk from perjury; nay deliberate and wilful perjury, who has made ſuch a contract, *&c.?* St. *Peter*, after having denied with an *oath* that he knew his maſter, went out and wept bitterly. May all men, that have taken this *oath* as falſely, feel the like compunction, and upon their repentance, obtain the ſame forgiveneſs.---You will obſerve that this ſtricture is confined

to the perjury conſequent to *Simony*; but the act itſelf, abſtracted from the oath, is of ſo pernicious a tendency, that I am ſure you never will commit it; you will not be ſo much of a *Samaritan* as to worſhip *Simon Magus*, for your God.

Retired men, who ſeldom exceed the limits of their own ſtudies, but form abſtracted and ſpeculative notions of mankind, will be apt to think it calumny to ſuppoſe any clergyman can be guilty of *Simony*; and I dare ſay, your honeſt unſuſpicious heart diſpoſes you to think ſo too: (for perjury is an unnatural wickedneſs, and your own breaſt can never ſuggeſt it to you:) but certainly

tainly ſome are, or there is a mad kind of generoſity gone out into the world, that ought to be taken up, and confined. For, do we not often ſee in the news-papers, advertiſements of *void turns*, and *immediate reſignations* wanted, or to be diſpoſed of? do we not hear of ſtrange *reſignations*, *preſentations*, and *re-preſentations!* of *holding of benefices* for others? of *leaſes of tythes to patrons* much below their values, *&c.?* In ſhort, as things are managed by ſome men, a captain in the guards may at the ſame time be the rector, or vicar of a pariſh; that is, enjoy all the profits, and emoluments of it. Some motive there is for all this;

and

to the perjury conſequent to *Simony*; but the act itſelf, abſtracted from the oath, is of ſo pernicious a tendency, that I am ſure you never will commit it; you will not be ſo much of a *Samaritan* as to worſhip *Simon Magus*, for your God.

Retired men, who ſeldom exceed the limits of their own ſtudies, but form abſtracted and ſpeculative notions of mankind, will be apt to think it calumny to ſuppoſe any clergyman can be guilty of *Simony*; and I dare ſay, your honeſt unſuſpicious heart diſpoſes you to think ſo too: (for perjury is an unnatural wickedneſs, and your own breaſt can never ſuggeſt it to you:) but certainly

tainly ſome are, or there is a mad kind of generoſity gone out into the world, that ought to be taken up, and confined. For, do we not often ſee in the news-papers, advertiſements of *void turns*, and *immediate reſignations* wanted, or to be diſpoſed of? do we not hear of ſtrange *reſignations*, *preſentations*, and *re-preſentations!* of *holding of beneſices* for others? of *leaſes of tythes to patrons* much below their values, *&c.?* In ſhort, as things are managed by ſome men, a captain in the guards may at the ſame time be the rector, or vicar of a pariſh; that is, enjoy all the profits, and emoluments of it. Some motive there is for all this;

and

and irrational it muſt be, or worſe.---Now is it not juſtly to apprehended, that a certain order of men, lately baniſhed two neighbouring kingdoms, invited by this infamous practice of ſome amongſt us, may come over hither, and commence *living-brokers?* they have been long uſed to mix ſpiritual and temporal things together, and thence to ſuck out no ſmall advantage. And may not *popery* by this means be let in at a door, we truſted the ſolemn pledges of oaths had ſufficiently barricaded? for I look upon men, who can deliberately perjure themſelves, to be ripe for any miſchief; they can have no honour, no conſcience,

no

no religion, but will be ready to deal with, or even turn *papiſts*, if ſuch be the condition of the obligation.---You cannot therefore be too much upon your guard againſt the ſpecious but treacherous friendſhips of *ſimonical* patrons, who, like *Judas*, betray with a *kiſs*. What drew *Dathan* and *Abiram* into the conſpiracy, was *Corah*'s being their neighbour, and their tents lying next to his. Good old *Jacob*, when, by the ſpirit of propheſy, he pronounces the fate of his poſterity, makes, by way of apoſtrophe, this excellent reſolution, which I heartily recommend to you. *O my ſoul* (ſays he) *come not thou into their ſecret! unto*

their

their aſſembly, O mine honour be not thou united!---But it is hoped the ſpirited enquiries now making by authority, will bring theſe men to ſhame and puniſhment.

As you will ſcorn ſuch patrons, and their corrupt offers; ſo do not aim at preferment by a noiſy huzza at popular elections: take off your hat to your ſuperiors at all times, but throw it up in the air for nobody. Vote quietly as your own political ſentiments direct you; and not with a bunch of ribbon in your hat, like a young recruit following the officious and noiſy call of a ſerjeant of the company.----Go not to elections where you have no vote, there will be mob enough without

out you; and never take in charge a room full of drunken freeholders any where. Truſt to your learning, and the exemplarineſs of your life; there are good people enow ſtill left, who will eſteem and probably provide for you; but ſhould it not be your good fortune to fall under their inſpection, you cannot be unhappy: for the more you read, and the better you live, the leſs you will want of this world.

But I will ſuppoſe you ſome time hence preferred; your merit will certainly do it; for I can by no means join in the murmurs of the diſcontented, that merit is totally diſregarded: look round

round you, and ſee how many men of piety and learning you can find unprovided for amongſt us; ſome few retired men; who ſcarce ever appear in the world, may, but in general where men do not expect too much, or overrate themſelves, they meet with their deſerts It is certain that humility is of herſelf an excellent patroneſs, and makes more men happy, than all the things in this world beſides.

In this partly new ſcene of life, let it be your determination to *reſide* upon your benefice, unleſs it be placed in an unwholſome air, and in that caſe to live as near it as you poſſibly can: for innumerable are the evils of *non-*

reſidence

reſidence. Private baptiſm, and the viſitation of the ſick particularly, muſt often be neglected, where the miniſter lives at any conſiderable diſtance from his pariſh. A clergyman indeed, that can ride an hundred miles in fourteen hours for a wager; may, if he thinks it of equal moment, ſerve a pariſh at *any* diſtance. But in general ſuch pariſhes are wretchedly ſupplied: the people ſeldom know whom they ſhall have, at what hour they will come, or whether at all; till at laſt, from their remiſſneſs, their hurry and indevotion, they conclude there is not much in it; and ſo become indifferent whether they have any

ſervice or not; hereby they are alienated from the church, and rendered an eaſy prey to the firſt ſect that profeſſes a greater zeal for religion, or makes a greater ſhew of attention and ſerioufneſs in diſcharging the offices of it.

Another evil of *non-reſidence* is the want of that pattern of piety and good-manners, which a faithful ſhepherd, who watches over his flock, will ſet them: for, after all, a good life is the moſt powerful eloquence, and carries more conviction and perſuaſion with it, than the grave and formal admonitions of a ſet diſcourſe. (If a man of an ill life can be hardy enough to make ſuch an one; for it requires great

great aſſurance, and ſteadineſs of countenance, to be ſevere upon the faults of others, of which we know ourſelves to be notoriouſly guilty.)

Another evil of *non-reſidence* is the want of that charity to the poor, which, I am afraid, is too often forgotten; and muſt, at beſt, ſometimes not be equally ſerviceable, for not coming in due ſeaſon: for he that goes over to his pariſh but once a week, if he finds any time to enquire into the ſtate of it, cannot be particular, to be ſure, cannot viſit, ſee, and hear the objects of it: and without ſuch enquiries, and a ſeaſonable relief conſequent upon them, he fails in a ſub-

ſtantial part of his duty. For however he may boaſt of his freehold, which the laws of man have ſo denominated, yet it is charged with certain charitable payments by the laws of God.

Another evil of *non-reſidence* is the ſuffering our parſonage-houſes to run to ruin: for they are generally turned into cottages, or, at beſt, into habitations, for little farmers. So that our ſucceſſors, ſhould they chance to have a better ſenſe of their duty than we had before them, and intend to reſide, will find our houſes *open* enough indeed to receive them, but when they are in, contrary to the laws of all hoſpitality, falling upon their heads.

heads. And as to allowances for dilapidations they are ſeldom to be had; compaſſion, perhaps, for a diſtreſſed family will not ſuffer them to make their demand.----It may be ſaid that *parochial viſitations*, were eſtabliſhed to remedy this evil: I revere the inſtitution, and think it well calculated for the purpoſe: but too often *expedition*, *fatigue*, *good-nature*, and a variety of other circumſtances concur in favour of the preſent incumbent, to the excluſion, or ruin of his immediate ſucceſſor.----I need not caution your good diſpoſition againſt a falſe and dirty mode of reſidence, that ſome mean ſouls have invented; which is the

purchaſing a farm, or a ſmall ſpot of ground in their pariſhes to build an houſe upon, that it may deſcend to their heirs at law: leſt that church, which probably nurſed them in their infancy, but certainly maintained them in their riper years, ſhould receive any return of gratitude at their deceaſe.---Some parſonage-houſes are already down, and others are falling; ſo that we begin to plead a *legal* exemption from reſidence upon our livings; and the next ſtep, I fear, will be, that they are *Sine-cures*.

There are many other caſual evils, ſuch as quarrels and animoſities among the pariſhoners, oppreſſions

oppreſſions of the poor, &c. which a *reſident* miniſter may generally prevent, and always accommodate, redreſs, or at leaſt mitigate: for no man can live in, and upon good terms with his pariſh (I mean ſuch terms as the diſcharge of his duty will procure him) but he muſt have conſiderable weight in it; all difficulties are ſubmitted to his judgment; and moſt diſputes referred to his deciſion.

But ſince neceſſity has introduced *pluralities* to make up even a ſcanty competency for the inferior clergy; I grant, that ſome pariſhes muſt be without *reſident* rectors or vicars: but then certainly, he, that has two livings,

ought

ought to *reſide* upon one; and if his income ariſing from both will permit, to keep a *reſident* curate upon the other. And in caſes, where a curate ſupplies two pariſhes of ſmall endowments, he ought to live upon one of them; unleſs a middle ſituation ſhould fortunately happen, that is near, and equally convenient for both. Inſtead of which, every one ſeeks his place of habitation, as pleaſure or whim directs. Some muſt live near a pack of hounds, becauſe they love hunting: others in large towns, for the ſake of company and publick diverſions. Every object of diſſipation is purſued throughout the week, till *dread-*

ful

ful ſunday comes. Now the waters are out, or the ſnow is deep, or the weather is extreamly cold, and they cannot ride to their pariſhes. But had they *reſided*, there had been no waters to croſs, no length of ſnow to wade thro', or much cold to endure before they entered their reſpective churches. To ſum up all, let me juſt point out to you, the fatal conſequences of *non-reſidence*, as exemplified in the environs of our two famous univerſities. In the pariſhes for ſome miles round, the lower people are moſt remarkably barbarous and uncivilized, though they are ſupplied by men of the firſt abilities, whom the neceſſary engagements of a college life

life will not permit to *reſide*.---- So little do learning and the greateſt accompliſhments avail, where *reſidence* is wanting!

Here *Methodiſm* takes her bawling ſtand: ſhe knows the credulity of vulgar minds, and turns it to her own account. With tidings of regeneration in one hand, and accuſations of the regular clergy in the other, ſhe leads captive the giddy multitude at pleaſure. Indeed, ſhe follows *non-reſidence*, as her deareſt friend, throughout the land; well knowing, that where no ſhepherd watches over his flock, there the deſerted ſtraggling ſheep are left an eaſy prey to the wolf.

Now,

Now, can any one wonder at people's grudging to pay tithes? for the plaineſt farmers know for what purpoſes they are ſettled; they know the equitable condition of the obligation. It is true indeed, they do not, in general, conſider the nature of tithes, and how abſolutely they are ſettled by the law of this land upon the clergy: neither do they conſider that their rents, as likewiſe the purchaſe of lands, are proportionably leſs on this account. So that their diſputes generally ariſe from hence; that they would have their compoſitions much below the conſiderations that are made them for their tithes: neither do they take

take in the expences of education, *&c.* but yet ſomething may be ſaid in favour of their prejudices, when the miniſter, to whom they pay their tithes, takes little, or no care of them. They may well endeavour to evade the laws of man, when they ſee their parſon can ſo eaſily diſpenſe with the laws of his miniſtry, and his God.---In all views a rigorous exaction of tithes, when made to *enrich* ourſelves from, rather than to *live of our miniſtry*, is indecent and culpable; but it is mockery of God, and man, to claim them under the ſolemn title of religion, without producing the conſideration, the credentials of a faithful

ful and conſcientious diſcharge of our parochial duties.

That I may not be thought to lay burthens upon your ſhoulders too grievous to be borne, and this advice ſeem to proceed rather from the ſeverity, than the experience of age, let me briefly go over again with the heads of it, and interrogate where the ſeverity lies.--can it be thought ſevere, to adviſe you to underſtand the holy ſcriptures, and to be learned in all the branches of your profeſſion ?---is it ſevere to adviſe you to diſcharge all the duties of the paſtoral office ?--- Is it ſevere to keep you to your own voluntary engagements at inſtitution, to *reſide* upon your

benefice, *niſi aliter diſpenſatum fuerit*?---Is it ſevere to caution you againſt ſome foibles in your dreſs, which are both indecent and ridiculous?---is it ſevere to caution you againſt *Simony*, which is never committed but at the peril of your fortune, and your ſoul. *&c.*---In ſhort, is it ſevere to adviſe you to preſerve the clerical character in it's utmoſt purity, and to have always a conſcience void of offence towards God, and towards man?

As theſe cannot be called ſeverities, ſo neither do they take up ſo much of our time, as to ſequeſter us from the enjoyments of life. We have leiſure for friendſhips, for converſation,

and

and for exercise: nay, we have leisure for the innocent pleasures of it; and a restricted leisure perhaps is the best suited for the perfect enjoyment of them. For pleasures, like prospects, must have their terminations; when both are wild and unbounded, they fatigue, and pall upon our senses.

And this leisure no one seems to grudge us. It is when a congregation, an infant, the sick, or a mournful family weeping over a departed parent or friend are made to *wait* for us, that censure opens her mouth. So long as we discharge our parochial duties punctually, we are considered as men of like passions with

with others, and the wiſe and good paſs over our involuntary frailties, and imperfections.

As we are by education formed for it, ſo we have leiſure to keep company with the higher ranks of mankind, who admit us into their friendſhips. To ſome, the ſober faculties of reaſoning and diſcourſe, to others, the ſpright-ly ſallies of imagination are moſt acceptable. In both we have nothing to do but to guard a-gainſt degeneracy; leſt gravity ſhould turn to ſourneſs, and wit into levity: the firſt is apt to wrap up religion in gloomy dark colours, that we ſee only the diſ-couraging and threatning cloud of her ſuppoſed habitation; the other,

other, to dreſs her out in a looſe and negligent garb, that leſſens her intrinſick dignity: whereas ſhe is too ſerene to terrify, and too majeſtic to be trifled with.

Theſe two extremes, next to a vicious courſe of life, and the neglect of our duty, are our greateſt enemies. For an auſterity that catches at every chearful expreſſion, and ſullenly tortures every word into a prophance, obſcene, or idle meaning, renders us odious; (eſpecially when it is well known, as is too often the caſe, to ſtrain at gnats, and ſwallow whole herds of camels) on the other hand, a trifling freedom with things ſacred, or a tacit,

approbation of it; a complaiſance that yields to indecencies, or favourably ſmiles at immodeſt expreſſions, make us contemptible.

Laſtly as we are (or ſhould be) contemplative men, we have leiſure for ſolitude and retirement; where we may look into ourſelves, and ſearch out our own hearts; and not go out of this world with a tolerable knowledge of moſt things in it, but ourſelves.

As then you value the intereſt of religion and virtue, and the credit of our holy profeſſion: as you value peace of conſcience, and ſerenity of mind: as you value your own ſoul, and thoſe committed

mitted to your care, and which you will be called upon at the dreadful day of judgment to anſwer for, *think on theſe things.*

I am, *&c.*

1. *Jan.* 1765.

A

SERMON

Preached before the

Incorporated SOCIETY

FOR THE

Relief of the WIDOWS and ORPHANS of CLERGYMEN within the County of *Suffolk*;

AT THEIR

ANNIVERSARY MEETING

IN THE

Pariſh-Church of St. *Mary at Tower*, *Ipſwich*, on *Thurſday* the 18th of *July*, 1751.

DEUTERONOMY XII, 12.

------*Foraſmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you.*

THAT men, devoted to *the ſervice of the miniſtry*, might meet with as few avocations as poſſible from the duties of their function, it pleaſed God, in ſettling the *Jewiſh* eccleſiaſtical polity, to exempt them from the ordinary cares and concerns of the world; by aſſigning them a maintenance that required neither their ſkill nor their labour to acquire: for this is the reaſon given by *Moſes*, and

and by God himſelf*, why *the Levite hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren.*

Upon this plan, and, probably, upon the ſame kind of ſupport, the ſchools of the prophets were founded; that they, having no earthly purſuits to divert them, might be the more at leiſure to attend the buſineſs of religion; to ſtudy and inculcate the laws of *Moſes*, and to qualify themſelves and others to be fit *meſſengers and prophets of the Lord.*

Upon theſe principles the two famous univerſities of this land ſeem to be erected: for the proviſion, which the piety of their founders has made for theſe ſocieties,

* See Numb. xviii. 21, 24. Deut. x. 8, 9.

ſocieties, is directed and adapted ſolely to the purpoſes of a ſtudious and contemplative life. Accordingly, the members of theſe learned bodies are engaged in the intereſts of humanity and religion; their ſtudies and employments are, to cultivate men's minds and manners, and to adorn with every accompliſhment the human ſoul; that there may never be wanting a number of men furniſhed with proper abilities and attainments to ſerve God both in church and ſtate. In theſe ſeminaries of religion and learning the clergy of the eſtabliſhed church are raiſed, and from thence are tranſplanted into *the houſe of the Lord*; and that they may

may not afterwards *be choak'd with the riches and cares of the world*, but *flouriſh in the courts of our God*, they likewiſe have *no part nor inheritance with their brethren*: and to ſecure them effectually from engaging in worldly affairs, a canon of our church, and the laws of this land forbid them to exerciſe any *ſecular* employments.

This wiſe inſtitution of God, and this pious care of our anceſtors in conſequence of it, have had, in the moſt material points, their deſigned effect; for learning and the knowledge of religion, the natural culture of unembarraſſed minds, by this means flouriſh and abound ------Theſe

preſerve

preſerve knowledge; theſe are *the cherubims that cover the ark of God, the flaming ſword that turneth every way to keep the way of the tree of life*; for ſhould we be permitted to go *one to his farm, and another to his merchandize, the key of knowledge* would be ſoon loſt, and *the vineyard of the Lord be laid wiſte*; *it would not be pruned nor digged, but there would come up briars and thorns*. But as in all tranſactions where man is a party, there will be imperfection; ſo here, our want of acquaintance with the world is oftentimes attended with temporal inconveniences; which, though over-blamed by the ample appointment made for the *Jewiſh*,

are, too often, very ſenſibly felt by the leſs-provided-for chriſtian clergy: and if to this cauſe be added ſome appendages both of our education and profeſſion, together with the common infirmities of human nature, we ſhall find an affecting ſolution of the misfortunes that occaſion this anniverſary meeting.

The words I have made choice of for my Text, are delivered by *Moſes* as a reaſon why the *Levites* ſhould be hoſpitably entertained by the reſt of the tribes, and that reaſon is founded on a command of God that this particular tribe ſhould have *no inheritance*. But as this command of God is in ſome meaſure adopted

dopted into the laws of chriſtian nations, and the uſage of our own in particular is conformable to it, the reaſon is ſtill very cogent that the chriſtian clergy ſhould meet with the like friendly reception. And as it oftentimes happens from ſtated, or accidental cauſes, that they cannot make proviſion for their families in caſe of mortality; I beg leave to transfer their intereſt in the text to their widows and orphans, as the proper objects of that aſſiſtance, which their huſbands, or fathers did not, ſtrictly ſpeaking, want; or, out of modeſty, did not aſk for.--- In order to this, permit me to lay before you,

Firſt

Firſt, Some of the impediments that prevent clergymen from making proviſion for their families in caſe of mortality.

Secondly, Some ſingular, if not peculiar circumſtances, that recommend their widows and orphans to our compaſſion.

Thirdly, Some of the private comforts, and publick advantages ariſing from making proviſion for them.

Firſt; That it may be neither matter of cenſure or ſurprize, that the families of the clergy are not always ſo well provided for as we could wiſh, it may be proper to account for it; for accounted for it may be, without the

the unkind imputation of folly or extravagance.

In order to this, let us take under conſideration the whole ſeries of a clergman's life.

In the early part of it, when others are acquiring a knowledge of men and things, we are acquiring learning, and a knowledge of books; and a ſort of learning that indiſpoſes us for the traffick of the world. The *Greek* and *Roman* moraliſts, by their pompous reaſonings, make our young minds even enthuſiaſtic in our contempt of it; their poets fire our imaginations, elevate us above ourſelves, and make us forget the wants of a mortal condition. As we advance

vance farther, and approach nearer to *the Temple of the Lord*, a calmer courſe of ſtudies indeed ſucceeds; but equally diſparaging of the world, and much more awful and authoritative. We may ſay of the former, *the Lord was not in the wind, or the earthquake, or the fire; but after the fire*, comes *a ſtill ſmall voice*, that gives a ſanction to the ſame train of thinking under proper regulations, and makes this philoſophical independence a means to the accompliſhment of a more exalted *wiſdom and knowledge*.

But if we had not theſe ſentiments and prepoſſeſſions in diſfavour of the world, yet the want of more early experience and

and application to buſineſs muſt naturally hinder us from making any tolerable advantages of it. The foundation of moſt men's fortunes is laid betimes, and the building is commonly carried up to ſome height, before *we* have either ſkill, or materials to begin with. Skill we have not; as for the reaſons before given, ſo for this, becauſe we have had no encouragement to endeavour after it; it being not ſo much wanted to acquire, as afterwards to manage our acquiſitions; and as for materials, God knows, they often come to us when we may ſay with *Barzillai*, *can I diſcern between good and evil? Can I taſte what I eat, or what I drink?*

If they come at all; for how many do we ſee ſtrugling all their lives upon the ſcanty appointments of others, or, what is worſe, upon ſome little acquiſitions, miſcalled *livings*, of their own; which are juſt enough to open the paſtoral expences, and either diſappoint the beggars they invite to the door, or make more and greater within?

But ſuppoſe ſome few of us are ſo fortunate as to get a competency of preferment early in life, and have been ſo provident as to lay in a moderate knowledge of the world; yet there are other impediments in the way, that concur to keep us from making any profitable uſe

of

of it. In the progreſs of our education we mix with men of diſtinction and fortune, who think is no diſhonour to admit us to ſome degrees of intimacy and friendſhip with them; and this happens at a time of life, when we are much more diſpoſed to imitate others than to think for ourſelves; of them we inſenſibly contract a taſte of things, which is too often above our future circumſtances and condition. And this caſe is unavoidable, unleſs it ſhould be thought right, with *Jeroboam*, to make *prieſts of the loweſt of the people*, and give them as *low* an education, or to bring them up immured by themſelves,

and ſo peſter the world with the ſuperciliouſneſs and auſterities of the cloyſter. I mention not therefore theſe circumſtances of our preſent education with regret, but with honour and gratitude; 'tis *our* misfortune only that we cannot carry on life upon the ſame principles we generally ſet out with. I muſt add, that to be unacquainted with buſineſs has been ſo long our characteriſtic, and annext to our profeſſion, that the world claims it by a ſort of preſcription; on which account, we are often obliged to decline ſome reaſonable advantages, rather than take the benefit of a knowledge

ſo

ſo generally thought inconſiſtent with our characters.

Upon preferment attend all the duties of the paſtoral office: and the firſt, as the credentials of our miniſtry, are acts of charity, of which the apoſtle bids us *be examples*; and indeed we muſt be ſo oftentimes beyond our circumſtances, if we would prevail upon others to *go and do likewiſe*. It would be happy for us, if men would judge more freely for themſelves of the objects of charity that ſollicit them, and of the proportion of worldly goods they can, and ought to ſpare for ſuch uſes: but, at preſent, our examples are commonly the rule for both; on which account we

are frequently obliged to give above *what we are able*, and make the moſt exquiſite of all rational pleaſures, literally, a *labour of love*. Theſe are inſtances where we *let our light ſo ſhine before men that they may ſee our good works*: There are others of a more private nature in which we are daily exerciſed; for as our office carries us to the houſe of ſickneſs and affliction, we ſee more of the poverty and diſtreſs of people than other men; and we do not ſee and *paſs by on the other ſide*. I mention not this laſt circumſtance as a burthen; for I know who has promiſed that *what* we thus *lay out ſhall be paid us again*: And indeed it is, in a great meaſure,

meaſure, *paid us again* already, by the continuance and increaſe of this charity; which, like the *cloud of Elijah*, was at firſt *no bigger than a man's hand*, but now *ſends a joyful rain upon the inheritance of God.*

Hoſpitality is another duty of the paſtoral office, that admits not of any of the ſaving maxims of worldly wiſdom, but opens every ſpring of the heart, and flows with bounty and liberality. In its primary ſenſe, it implys a kind reception and accommodation of ſtrangers: but as it is to be practiſed by *us*, it conſiſts in a free and generous reception of the people committed to our charge; in an openneſs of coun-

tenance, as well as of doors, according to a *Roman* writer* ; and in doing them all good and friendly offices : which duty *we particularly* are obliged to practice, both by ſcripture and reaſon. By ſcripture, becauſe we are expreſly commanded to be *given to hoſpitality*, and to be *lovers of hoſpitality:* by reaſon, becauſe nothing tends more to the making our miniſtry uſeful to mankind; as it lets us into a knowledge of the particular ſtate and condition of our people, invites them to throw

* Cura ut Aditus ad te diurni atque nocturni pateant; neque foribus ſolùm Ædium tuarum, ſed etiam vultu ac fronte, quæ eſt animi janua ; quæ ſi ſignificant voluntatem abditam eſſe ac retruſam, parvi refert patere oſtium. *Quint. Cic. de Petit. Conſ. ad M. Tull. Fratr.*

throw off all diſguiſe, and unfold themſelves to us; and thereby furniſhes us with opportunities of giving them advice, better adapted to their reſpective circumſtances, and in a manner leſs diſtaſteful than what they can receive by the beſt diſcourſes from the pulpit: and thus it becomes *profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for inſtruction in righteouſneſs, that they may be perfect, thoroughly furniſh'd unto all good works.* It is therefore a very falſe and criminal delicacy, that, on account of the meanneſs of their ſtations, the uncouthneſs of their manners, or the inelegancy of their converſation, refuſes a friendly and hoſ-

hoſpitable intercourſe with the loweſt of the people committed to our charge; eſpecially as a man may accommodate himſelf to all conditions of life, and put himſelf into all ſhapes, without ever loſing his eſſential form, or departing from his dignity. On the other hand, the world puts a very uncandid interpretation upon our conduct, when it calls our condeſcenſion, vulgarity, and every little departure of ours from the ſtricter laws of œconomy, profuſeneſs; when both of them are very often owing to a different and laudable cauſe, a well-intended hoſpitality. The uſe of this virtue is indeed very diffuſive, and may be ſeen every where

where; but eſpecially in country pariſhes; where we often find it neceſſary to civilize as well as reform, and to file off the *Aſperitas agreſtis* before we can introduce the loving-kindneſs of the Goſpel.

Here I ſhould be glad to cloſe this head: but, as *Job* ſays, *if I juſtify myſelf, mine own mouth ſhall condemn me, if I ſay I am perfect it ſhall alſo prove me perverſe*; and therefore I frankly own that miſconduct is ſometimes the occaſion of theſe misfortunes. The inſtances, I hope, are rare, and wherever they are found, enough of the cauſes before-mentioned to extenuate their guilt will be found with them. But let ſuch

men

men be excluded the benefit intended by my text, as undeſerving of it; yet their injured innocent widows and orphans cannot, upon any principles of charity or reaſon. And this brings me to conſider.

Secondly, Some ſingular, if not peculiar circumſtances, that recommend the poor widows and orphans of clergymen to our compaſſion.

It may be obſerv'd that a clergyman, on account of his liberal education, and the intrinſick honour of his profeſſion, generally matches into a family of credit and faſhionable appearance; ſo that moſt probably the dear companion of his life comes out

out of a houſe where adverſity never yet enter'd. She has been brought up with great tenderneſs, indulged the innocent diverſions of life, and met with many marks of reſpect and eſteem in the world: nothing has yet happened to put her in mind of the uncertainty of human happineſs; and *in our proſperity* we are not apt of ourſelves to make ſuch mortifying reflections, but rather to think *we ſhall never be caſt down, there ſhall no evil happen to us.* By a change of condition theſe emoluments are ſo far from ceaſing, that they are rather heighten'd and improved by the acceſſion of others; and adverſity, by a common deception, ſeems

ſeems to be at a greater diſtance than ever: for in this new ſphere of life, ſhe ſees more of the weakneſs and wants of people that daily aſk relief, and is apt to take the meaſure of her own ſtrength from thence, and to form a ſecurity upon the compariſon. And if at any time a cloud ariſe that threatens to eclipſe this happineſs, hope, with its friendly companions, ſoon diſpels it; a hope, that partakes not of covetouſneſs nor ambition, but a ſimple and modeſt hope that *they that preach the Goſpel ſhall live of the Goſpel.* From theſe cauſes it happens, that ſhe is unapprehenſive of the ſcene's changing, at leaſt, to ſo tragical

tragical an one, as it often does: for where there has not been a preparatory ſeries of difficulties, and there is not a natural gloominеſs of temper to favour ſuch ſpeculations, it is impoſſible to foreboae the impending evil in all its ſad conſequences; ſo that poverty comes on, not only with the ſtrength of *an armed man*, but with the privacy of *a thief in night*. I muſt further obſerve, that by converſing, perhaps, many years with an ingenious man, her mind is refined and made more delicate; by which improvement of her underſtanding the ſenſe of her adverſity is greatly quickned; for groſs minds do not ſo eaſily admit the

ſubtile

ſubtile pain that ariſes from reflection.-----Something of the ſame kind may be ſaid of the orphans of clergymen: for the tender uſage they meet with when young, makes their loſs and diſappointment the ſeverer; it being much more eaſy to live always in a low condition, than to fall into it from a plentiful one; as the natives of an unhealthy climate fare better under it, than foreigners that come out of a better.

I will not enter into a deſcription of theſe unhappy objects, eſpecially the firſt, at the onſet of grief upon the death of their huſbands; it is a ſcene too melancholy for *me* to repreſent, and for

for the *generality* of this aſſembly to hear. It will be leſs ſhocking to follow one of them in a calmer hour, when the ſallies of paſſion are over. And the firſt thing that occurs, is that as *the deſire of* her *eyes*, ſo *the ſtaff of* her *life is taken away*; ſhe preſently diſcovers that the ſmall remainder of ſubſtance is not her own, but that the creditor is at hand to *take away what* ſhe *ſeemeth to have*; ſhe finds no property but her children, a property that ſtimulates grief, and makes it more intolerable. Now, as *Job* ſays of himſelf, *they that dwell in* her *houſe, and* her *maid count* her *for a ſtranger*, ſhe *is an Alien in their ſight*; ſhe *calleth* her

ſervant, and he giveth no anſwer, ſhe *intreateth with her mouth to no purpoſe.* Her next thoughts are how to ſubſiſt herſelf and wretched family. The world is too full of adepts in buſineſs to admit novices into any tolerable ſhare of its profits; the rich and the great in too many engagements to take notice of ſilent want; they are either *talking or purſuing, or in a journey, or peradventure ſleeping and muſt be awaked.* She knows not where to begin her little penury; which of her few articles to retrench firſt; and where ſhe can bear the moſt want, and ſuffer leaſt; ſhe *weigheth* her *grief, and layeth*

eth her *calamities in a balance together.*

Equal is the misfortune of the orphans of poor clergymen, tho' perhaps not at firſt ſo affecting their diſtreſs; they being rather objects of our rational faculties before they become objects of our paſſions, and therefore our commiſeration is not ſo inſtantaneous in this caſe as in the other. But when they are placed before us in a proper point of view, and we conſider where their loſs principally centers, we ſhall find as much cauſe to pity their fate, and to endeavour to make it leſs rigorous and ſevere. Beſides the common ſupport of a decent and comfortable way of living, they

have loſt the informer of their minds, and the regulator of their manners: the clue which was to lead them ſafe through the Labyrinths of a bad world, is relaxed, by the failing of the hand that held the other end, and yields to all the wanderings and excurſions of giddy and unthinking youth: and thus are *they* left to enter upon the ſtage of the world, imperfect in their parts, and unacquainted with the *Drama*, whoſe ſole ſubſiſtance depends upon acquitting themſelves properly on it.

But as affecting as theſe ſcenes of diſtreſs may be, I do by no means endeavour to move your compaſſion indiſcriminately, nor

to

to carry you above the conſideration of virtue and goodneſs in the objects themſelves: for I do not think that a ſufficient degree of merit is derived from the bare circumſtance of their being the widows and orphans of clergymen; and indeed the laws of the ſociety are founded on the ſame principles; which (that we may be aſſured *the ſeed we ſow falls on good ground*) require certificates of their behaviour before they can be relieved. Nor indeed is it ſo much my aim to excite your pity (for *I know your charity*) as to congratulate you upon the beneficial influences of it; which being a much more agreeable ſubject, permit me,

Thirdly,

Thirdly, To lay before you ſome of the private comforts and publick advantages of it.

There is not a kinder office than to ſmooth the bed of ſickneſs at the needful hour of death; and the greateſt worldly diſturbance (indeed I can think of no other from the world) comes from the heart-breaking thoughts, of a wife and children being thrown deſtitute into a bad world: for though the conſciouſneſs of a life ſpent in doing good, may enable a man to bear up under any adverſe change of condition, with reſpect to himſelf; it cannot pacify his tenderneſs and concern for thoſe of his own

own family. But this charity blunts, at leaſt, the edge of ſuch painful reflections; for tho' it be not a fund ample enough to *fold up the arms* of the moſt indolent, it is certainly ſufficient to adminiſter comfort to the moſt dejected. But the greateſt comfort is undoubtedly to the objects themſelves; as it delivers them from the miſeries and temptations of extreme want, and diverts them from comparing their preſent ſufferings with their former happineſs; which would be greatly irritated and increaſed by ſuch a compariſon: for this ſeaſonable relief interpoſes itſelf betwixt them, and

ſhuts

ſhuts out, or obſcures the view from the one to the other. It comes not indeed with the ſalutation, *ſoul take thine eaſe, for ſtore is laid up for thee for many years*; but with the comfortable promiſe, *dwell in the land, and verily thou ſhalt be fed*; it prevents deſpair, which freezes up our faculties, and renders us both unable and unwilling to endeavour at living; for Hope is the ſpring of all action, and when that fails, all the other actuating principles fail with it. This charity is not a little improved, and made more acceptable, by the channel through which it is conveyed: for by reaſon of that relation ſubſiſting among

among the clergy, their widows and orphans can with leſs pain commmunicate their difficulties, and receive aſſiſtance; and ſo that confuſion that ariſes in ingenuous minds under ſuch ſort of dependence, is greatly extenuated, if not wholly prevented.

But, beſides the common motives of humanity, that incline us to commiſerate the wretched in all ſtations of life, there are reaſons of a publick nature that require it more particularly at our hands towards the objects of this charity. If people of merit and ſome ſtation are ſuffered to fall down upon a level with the vulgar without any publick notice or concern, men

of

of contracted and illiberal minds will be apt to think, that all diſtinction lies in wealth, and that *that* makes the whole of the difference between one man and other; and conſequently that virtue (which is the ſupport of every ſociety, and alone gives ſtability to publick, as well as private happineſs) has no ſhare in conferring the honours of rank and ſuperiority. It would alſo leſſen men's notions of that ſubordination of one condition to another, which is ſo neceſſary, that without it there would be nothing but confuſion and diſorder in the world. Beſides, well-principled minds are a treaſure to ſociety of ineſtimable value;

value; for *when the city is in danger, nothing but* a virtuous *wiſdom can deliver it*; and I may ſay, without aſſuming too much to my profeſſion, that no children are better taken care of and inſtructed than the children of the clergy; it muſt be ſo in the reaſon of things, becauſe education is moſt commonly their whole patrimony. From this prediſpoſition therefore, this early bias in favour of virtue, we may promiſe ourſelves all imaginable ſucceſs, if we beſtow upon it the neceſſary culture to bring it to maturity; eſpecially when we conſider the natural deſire in all ingenuous dependents to render themſelves ſtill

more

more acceptable to their benefactors, and the infinite obligations the publick confers, when it condeſcends to repreſent a *father*.

But the greateſt advantage of all is its tendency to ſupport and promote religion.---So long as the world is govern'd by its preſent rules of judging, the dignity of the wiſeſt inſtitution cannot be upheld, unleſs the adminiſtrators of it be preſerved from contempt; and it is from externals generally that reſpect is ſecured; for vulgar minds eſpecially do not enter into the reaſon of things, but form their opinions from appearance only. All nations, both barbarous and polite, have been ſenſible of this

this truth, and for that reaſon have always made liberal proviſion for, and conferr'd outward marks of eſteem on thoſe who officiated in holy things. The *Magi* in *Perſia*, the *Brachmans* in *India*, and the *Druids* in this our iſland, were all diſtinguiſhed by poſts of honour and authority. Among the *Grecians*, and afterwards among the *Romans*, their kings performed the rites of religion; and after it was found convenient to ordain other prieſts, ample proviſion was made for them, and many external marks of reſpect ſettled upon them.

What has been ſaid may be addreſſed to all ranks and orders

of

of men: becauſe ſome of the conſiderations affect us as we are human, others as we are ſocial, and all of them as we are religious creatures.

Does this charity oftentimes compoſe the mind at the trying hour of death? then whoever carries his thoughts forward to that unavoidable period, and conſiders the neceſſity of calmneſs and ſerenity at that momentous juncture, will encourage and promote it.--Are theſe objects of undeſerv'd diſtreſs? then 'tis the proper gratification of compaſſion to relieve them; and this binds every man, for whoever miſtakes this flower for one of the weeds the prejudices of education have planted

planted in his mind, deſtroys the greateſt natural beauty in it, pity being founded in human nature, and as old as the creation itſelf.---Is this charity of publick utility? then it claims the protection and favour of all men that wiſh well to ſociety; for no private conſideration whatever can excuſe us from promoting every tendency to the publick good.--Does this charity advance the honour of God? then whoever thinks worthily of the Supreme Being, and the neceſſity of religion with reſpect to himſelf and the world about him, will readily contribute towards it. *Finally, brethren, whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things*

things are honeſt, whatſoever things are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are lovely, whatſoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praiſe, they all conſpire to recommend this charity.

I will detain you no longer upon a ſubject, which, I know, moſt, and I hope all here preſent, have already at heart. But it becomes me, in the name of all the objects of it, and in the name of the whole body of the clergy, to acknowledge with gratitude our obligations to the many generous contributors this charity has met with in the world. *Gold and ſilver we have*

none

none to make them a temporal return; but our conſtant *prayer to God ſhall be, that they may be ſaved in the day of the Lord Jeſus.*

And as we are conſcious to ourſelves, my reverend brethren, of the reaſons why we meet with ſuch favour and encouragement, let it be our daily care, by a due vigilance and attention to the duties of our office, to deſerve the continuance of them. This will pre-diſpoſe men to give help in the day of adverſity; for there is a complacency in relieving objects that come to us under ſuch complex advantages, that far exceeds the ſimple affection of pity: and this is the moſt probable method of preſerving this charity, 'till

there ſhall be no widow to make lamentation.

To the goodneſs of our lives, let us join our unwearied diligence and zeal to promote this charity, and particularly by our own contributions; that we may not be accuſed of *laying that burthen upon men's ſhoulders which we ourſelves will not move with one of our fingers.* Let it be our conſtant aim, by exhortation, by perſuaſion, and by every honeſt method of addreſs, to augment the number of its friends; and if any of us have *found favour in the ſight* of the rich and the great, let us, like *Joſeph*, aſſign over ſome ſhare of it, at leaſt, to the ſervice of our *brethren*

and

and companions; for whoſe *ſakes* let us *wiſh it proſperity*; *yea, becauſe of the houſe of the Lord our God* let us *ſeek to do it good.*---- To theſe endeavours let us add our praiſes and thankſgivings to God, as for his protection in general of his church and people, ſo for this inſtance of it in particular, in which we are ſo intimately concerned. Let our *ſong be always of the loving kindneſs of the Lord*, and *with* our *mouths* let us *ever be ſhewing forth his truth from generation to generation.*

INFANT BAPTISM

CONSIDERED,

Under the great Probability, if not abſolute certainty of its Practice, in the firſt Ages of Chriſtianity.

" Search the Scriptures." John chap. 5. v. 39.

" When the Senſe of Scripture appears doubt-
" ful, and Diſputes have been raiſed about it,
" enquire into the Senſe of the Chriſtian Church
" in the firſt Ages, as the beſt Interpreters of
" Scripture."

Bp. STILLINGFLEET.

" The Mind ſhou'd be kept in a perfect In-
" differency, not inclining to either ſide, any
" farther than Evidence ſettles it by knowledge,
" or the over balance of *probability* gives it the
" turn of Aſſent and Belief."

Mr. LOCKE.

PREFACE.

WHEN I first sat down to examine the foundation, upon which the Antipædo-baptists ground their separation from the Church of England, I expected to find some shew of reason, at least in their arguments, to support it; but no less to my surprize, than my disappointment, I found nothing but ignorance and quibble: ignorance from not comparing one text of scripture with another; quibble, for a plausible support of it.

PREFACE.

In all inſtitutions, both divine and human, ſomething is and muſt be left for our reaſon to infer; this is one of the purpoſes for which it was given us; for we are not always to be led by the hand, but when put into the right road, are, with the grace of God, to make the beſt of our journey ourſelves.

There are truths to which there is no certain and infallible path, but probability muſt be our guide; and in ſuch caſes, reaſon turns the ſcale in favour of the greateſt, and then embraces it as poſſeſſed of almoſt a degree of certainty.

But in defiance of theſe evident principles, the Antipædo-baptiſts, with an abſurd ſcrupuloſity, will infer nothing, and conclude nothing; they

they aſk for a ſign where no ſign is given; and with illogical perverſeneſs, incline to the leaſt probable ſide of the queſtion.

That this is the caſe I hope will appear from what follows; wherein I have endeavoured to ſhew that from ſcripture, and the teſtimonies of the earlieſt fathers it is moſt probable, that from the beginning of chriſtianity, infants were admitted to baptiſm.

N. B. For want of Greek Types the Author has been confin'd in his Quotations; but the Reader may depend on the faithfulneſs of his Tranſlation of the Originals.

INFANT BAPTISM, &c.

IN the Hiſtory of *Jeſus Chriſt* recorded by the four Evangeliſts, we find an account of two commiſſions,† which he gave his apoſtles, *to preach and baptize*; the one after his entrance upon his miniſtry, the other within a little time after his reſurrection; by the firſt of which they were confin'd to the *Jews* only, by the ſecond they were to

† Matt. chap. x. ver. 5, 6, 7, &c. Mark, chap. vi. ver. 7, 8, 9, &c. Luke c. ix. ver. 1, 2, 3, &c. compar'd with, John c. iii. ver. 22, 26, and chap. iv. ver. 1, 2. again, Matt. xxviii. ver. 19, 20.

to go to the *Gentiles* alſo; by the one they were to baptize into the belief of a Meſſiah ſtill to come, by the other into the belief of a Meſſiah already come, in conjunction with God the *Father*, and God the *Holy Ghoſt*. But as explicit as each of them ſeems to be with regard to the *national* ſubjects of baptiſm, there is a profound ſilence in both touching the age neceſſary to qualify them for it. To account for this ſilence, there are but two ways; either to ſuppoſe that there was at that time ſome eſtabliſh'd cuſtom or other which our Saviour approv'd, and knew his apoſtles would naturally take for a rule, if he gave them none;

or elſe that he gave them ſome private inſtructions not recorded in ſcripture how to conduct this affair; for ſhould we take in a third, and admit the example of *John Baptiſt* for their guide, we ſhall argue in a circle; becauſe we have ſtill to aſk what inſtructions he had, and whether they varied from the common practice.‡

If the apoſtles conducted themſelves by any former law, or eſtabliſh'd cuſtom, it was deriv'd from the *Jews*, becauſe their national prejudices, we know, would not ſuffer them to take it elſewhere; and if they had it from them,

‡ See John chap. i. ver. 25. Talmud, Balylon, Rabbi, Solomon, Maimonides, &c.

them, it was either the *law of circumciſion*, or a *cuſtom which the Jews had of admitting Proſelites to their religion by baptiſm*; they having no other laws or cuſtoms that bore the leaſt affinity to the end and form of chriſtian baptiſm. If they took the law of circumciſion for their rule, then they *baptiz'd men, and male infants*; becauſe under that law, *men and male infants were circumcis'd*. If they took the cuſtom of admitting Proſelites by baptiſm, then they *baptiz'd men, women, and their children*; becauſe *men, women, and their children*, were by this cuſtom admitted to baptiſm: in either caſe they had a ſure rule to conduct themſelves by,

by, and ſo could not err in the execution of their office.

If the apoſtles were not governed by any former law, or eſtabliſh'd cuſtom, then they certainly had private inſtructions given them how to act in this matter; which are neither expreſs'd, nor intimated in holy ſcripture: for what is commonly urg'd from the wording of the laſt commiſſion, will afford but little aſſiſtance in tracing out what thoſe inſtructions were; becauſe we have many paſſages in ſcripture related after others, that were really tranſacted before them. Thus John the Baptiſt, their favorite, baptiz'd before he preach'd

preach'd, and before men confeſſed their ſins.§

But which way ſoever the apoſtles took their directions, no doubt they were made perfectly clear to them; the importance of the commiſſion requir'd it; and therefore we can not think, that they were left to pick them out by aukward criticiſms, and remote implications. To know which method they follow'd, and if the latter, whether it differ'd materially from the former, is the next enquiry, in which we ſhall be greatly aſſiſted, by examining ſome paſſages relating to Chriſt and his apoſtles,

§ I mention this to ſhew the fallacy of the argument taken from the preciſe arrangement of the words in the ſecond Commiſſion.

apoſtles, ſubſequent to the firſt commiſſion he gave them to *preach and baptize*. I ſhall begin with their return, when *they come to tell him all things, what they had done, and what they had taught* in conſequence of it: And the firſt thing obſervable is the quality of the multitude that followed them, which St. *Matthew* tells us, conſiſted of *five thouſand men, beſides women and children.*‖ Now as this multitude did not all of them come to be cured of their diſtempers, (St. *Luke* ſays, *he heal'd them that had need of healing*) a part came to be taught, and to be baptiz'd by the apoſtles.

‖ Mark chap. vi. ver. 30. pueruli, little children, Matt. chap. xiv. v. 21.

But why they incumber'd themſelves with little children, unleſs upon the proſpect of their receiving ſome benefit alſo, cannot be conceiv'd; and as there were but two ways of doing them ſervice, either by *healing* them of their infirmities, or by *baptizing* them, for one or other, or both of theſe reaſons they were brought. It would be unreaſonable, I grant, in the *Pædo-baptiſts* to contend, that *all* theſe *little children* were brought only to be *baptiz'd*; but then it is as unreaſonable in the *Antipædo-baptiſts*, to contend that they were *all* brought only to be *healed* of their infirmities: the moſt natural and equitable way of adjuſting the

the difference is to allow theſe *little children* to come upon the ſame footing with the reſt of the multitude, partly to be *baptiz'd*, and partly to be *healed* of their infirmities: In confirmation of this, the circumſtances and quality of theſe people as being men, women, and children, will induce us to think the apoſtles follow'd the cuſtom of the *Jewiſh* baptiſm, which was adminiſter'd to men, women and their children.

Another circumſtance that gives light to this affair, St. *Mark* records in the 10 Cap. which, if it do not immediately relate to Infant Baptiſm, yet it conſequentlially confirms its practicableneſs. He tells us (ver. 1.) that

Jeſus being in the coaſts of Judea, (where he baptiz'd by his apoſtles,*) *the people reſorted to him again*, and (ver. 13, 14, 15, 16) *brought young children*, or as St. *Luke* calls them, *Infants*, *that he ſhould touch them, and his diſciples rebuked thoſe that brought them, but when Jeſus ſaw it, he was much diſpleaſed, and ſaid unto them, ſuffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of ſuch is the Kingdom of God, verily I ſay unto you, whoſoever ſhall not receive the Kingdom of God; as a little child, he ſhall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and bleſſed them*

* John chap. iv. ver. 1, 2.

them. Upon which paſſage I would obſerve, that as this thing happen'd in *Judea*, where the apoſtles baptiz'd, it ſeems probable that the people had met with encouragement to bring their children; at leaſt, that they had not been formally rejected.--That they did not bring them to be cured of any bodily diſtempers; becauſe St. *Matthew* ſays, they were brought to him, that *he ſhould put his hands upon them and pray*;---That *the Diſciples rebuked thoſe that brought them*, becauſe Chriſt had not yet perform'd any bodily miniſtry, *he baptiz'd by his Apoſtles*; ſo that they thought, as it was too great a freedom: ſo likewiſe that it

was, as it were, aſking of him an office, which he had not ſhewn any deſign to undertake himſelf.---That by his *taking them up in his arms, putting his hands upon them, and bleſſing them,* Chriſt ſhew'd that he thought children capable of ſpiritual bleſſings.---That from our Saviour's ſaying, *ſuffer the little children to come unto me;* it appears that he thought them capable of being his Diſciples; becauſe to *come to him,* or *not to come to him,* in a figurative ſenſe, implies being Proſelites or not, to his religion, and the original verb juſtifies this ſenſe, from which the word *Proſelite* is deriv'd. That from the reaſon he gives for ſuffering them

them to come unto him, it appears, that he thought them fit ſubjects of his kingdom; which is further confirm'd by his making children the ſtandard of the qualifications for this kingdom. Theſe circumſtances put together, the Apoſtles cou'd neither doubt of children's being capable of baptiſm, nor of our Saviour's approbation of it. Whatever rule the Apoſtles obſerv'd, therefore in the choice of the ſubjects of baptiſm, it is evident, ſurely, that they muſt think children comprehended under it; and that, if they were govern'd by ſome private inſtructions of our Saviour, they did not differ ma-

terially from the eſtabliſh'd baptiſm of the Jews.

I cannot omit to take notice of one remarkable paſſage more; which, precedes the ſecond commiſſion; and that is, what our Saviour ſaid to *Nicodemus* upon this queſtion of baptiſm (John chap. iii. ver. 3.) *except a man (one) be born again* (ver. 5.) *born of water, he cannot enter the kingdom of God*; where our Saviour ſays expreſſly, without exception of age, &c. that *every one* that would enter the kingdom of God, muſt be baptiz'd. The Apoſtles therefore, who had heard their maſter ſay that *children were to enter the kingdom of God*, and here that *none* could enter, but *what were baptiz'd*, could not

not but think that *children were to be baptiz'd. After theſe things*, after this conference with *Nicodemus, came Jeſus and his Diſciples into the land of Judea, and there he tarried with them, and baptiz'd.*† Which circumſtance of time inclines one to think, that this converſation was to be a confirmation of the practice of infant-baptiſm; (and indeed theſe are the moſt explicit inſtructions that are recorded in ſcripture) of any Chriſt gave upon this ſubject, for after what they had heard from this converſation, nothing could excuſe them, but a formal prohibition, from baptizing infants, of which we find

† John chap. iii. ver. 22.

find no mention: The ſum of the argument is this, Chriſt declar'd that infants were capable of being admitted into the kingdom of God, but that no perſon cou'd be admitted that was not baptiz'd; therefore Chriſt intended that Infants ſhou'd be baptiz'd: For this reaſon, there was no occaſion for our Lord to particularize Infants in his commiſſion to his Apoſtles, to baptize all nations. But if our Lord did not intend that infants ſhould be baptiz'd, there was a neceſſity for a prohibition of it; for the circumſtances already cited, would certainly induce the Apoſtles to do it. Beſides, it is natural to ſuppoſe, that

that their countrymen would upon embracing a new religion, expect ſome initiating rite for their children, as well as themſelves, eſpecially baptiſm, if that was us'd to initiate infants of Jewiſh Proſelites, as appears from Hiſtory it was;‡ and it is as natural to think that thoſe very Apoſtles, who, in inſtances very offenſive, were ready to accommodate themſelves to their countrymen, ſhould in this indulge them. For theſe reaſons, our Saviour, who well knew the difficulty of keeping his apoſtles to the purity and ſimplicity of their new religion, and the

‡ Babylonie Talmud, Rabbi Solomon, Maimonides, &c. &c.

the danger of leaving them to themſelves in matters of importance, would certainly have expreſſly forbidden the baptiſm of infants, had he not approv'd of and intended that infants ſhould be baptiz'd. Theſe are all or moſt of the paſſages relating to baptiſm before our Saviour's Reſurrection. In which we find reaſon to think that the Apoſtles conducted themſelves by the cuſtom of the *Jews*, or if by any private inſtructions, that thoſe inſtructions did not materially differ from the *Jewiſh* cuſtom, in their adminiſtration of baptiſm. Our next enquiry is whether any alteration was made in this, particularly the ſecond commiſſion after his reſurrection, In which enquiry

quiry I ſhall firſt endeavour to give the true meaning of the words, and then collect what I can of the practice of the Apoſtles in conſequence of it.

The words in our tranſlation, *teach all nations*, are in the *Greek diſciple all nations*, which is expreſſed by a word in the *Hebrew*, that ſignifies *to initiate*. But according to the *Greek*, tho' to *diſciple* does in its primary acceptation imply to *make Diſciples by teaching*, yet in a figurative ſenſe, any one, who becomes a follower of another, or is join'd to the leading man of any ſchool or ſect, however he becomes ſo, is call'd a *Diſciple*. Inſtances of which we find in the New Teſtament.

ament. *Jeſus calls Simon, and Andrew his brother, James ſon of Zebedee, and John his brother; and they left their ſhip and their father, and follow'd him*; which reſignation of themſelves to Chriſt, and liſting as it were under his banner, is one ſpecies of diſcipleſhip, that is not the effect of teaching or inſtruction, for ſubſequent to this, *Chriſt open'd his mouth and taught them.*§ In the ſame manner *Matthew* was called to be a Diſciple.† I grant that theſe are inſtances of Diſcipleſhip by faith, but that is as remote from the primary ſenſe

§ Matt. chap. iv. ver. 18, 21, chap. v. ver. 1, 2.

† Matt. ix. chap. ver. 9.

ſenſe of the word, as any other ſpecies can be; as this faith was not the effect of inſtruction. In another place we ſhall find, that a man may be well inſtructed, and yet not be a Diſciple. *Whoſoever doth not bear his croſs,* (i. e. ſuffer any hardſhip for my ſake) *and come after me, cannot be my Diſciple.* ‖ Many more examples of the figurative uſe, of the word Diſciple might be produced from ſcripture. Among the *Romans* an apprentice, as ſoon as his indentures were executed, before he had been at all inſtructed in the myſteries of his trade, was called a *Diſciple* § of his maſter.

‖ Luke xiv. chap. v. 27.

§ Diſcipulus.

maſter. Amongſt us, children are ſaid to be ſcholars or Diſciples of ſuch, or ſuch a maſter from the inſtant they are admitted under him, before they have learnt one tenet, or perhaps one letter of him. And in this ſenſe we muſt underſtand the word *Diſciple, to make ſcholars of, or followers of Chriſt; to admit them under him, and enter them into his ſervice*; for if we read ſimply *teach*, or litterally *Diſciple by, teaching all nations*, how ſhall we acquit ourſelves of the ſucceeding verſe, without charging the commiſſion with tautology; for then it will run thus. *Teach*, or *Diſciple by teaching all nations, baptizing them*, &c. *teaching them*

them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you; for what ſhould they teach but whatſoever Chriſt had commanded? but if we underſtand it; *admit into, enter into the ſervice of Chriſt make ſcholars of, or followers of him by baptiſm*, there will be no redundancy in the Commiſſion: Should it be objected, that if the Apoſtles were to *diſciple by baptizing*, that then they were to admit believers and unbelievers promiſcuouſly to baptiſm, becauſe they were to *diſciple all nations*; for if they were not, there ſhould have been a diſtinction made in the commiſſion, between thoſe who were to be baptiz'd, and who not, before

they were taught. To this I anſwer, that there was no ſuch neceſſity; but the thing might be left to the diſcretion of the Apoſtles; for common ſenſe, if they had not been favour'd with a faithfuller guide, and common practice in the like caſes, with which they were well acquainted, would certainly lead them to teach adult perſons, before they admitted them or their children to baptiſm.

Beſides, there could be no occaſion to provide againſt a caſe that could not happen: For can it be thought, that either Jew or Gentile would deſire to be baptiz'd into a religion every where ſpoken againſt, before they had

ſome

ſome conviction of the truth of it; and if they had ſuch a conviction, they were fit ſubjects of baptiſm?

That the Apoſtles underſtood the commiſſion in this ſenſe, we have great reaſon to think, when we read of their baptizing whole houſeholds and families; and the only preſumption to the contrary is the poſſible caſe of there being no infants in thoſe houſeholds or families; for if *Lydia*, had any in her family, ſhe does not by any overtact deſtroy the probability of their being baptiz'd. *When ſhe was baptiz'd and her houſehold, ſhe beſought the Apoſtles to go into her houſe and abide there.*

*there.** If the *jailor* had any infants in his family, or *Criſpus*, or *Stephanus*, nothing is ſaid to invalidate the probability of their being baptiz'd; for if the *jailor rejoic'd believing in God with all his houſe*; if *Criſpus, the chief ruler believ'd in the Lord with all his houſe*; if *Stephanus and his houſhould addicted themſelves to the miniſtry of the ſaints*,† nothing in common ſenſe can be concluded from thence, but only that as many in each family *believed, rejoic'd, and addicted themſelves to the miniſtry of the ſaints* as were capable of it; for it is no impropriety

* Acts, chap. xvi. ver. 15.

† Acts, xvi. ver. 24, and chap. xviii. ver. 8. 1 Cor. chap. xvi. ver. 15.

priety of ſpeech, at leaſt, it is a common and allow'd of expreſſion, to ſay a *family believes, rejoices, returns thanks*, &c. tho' *one* or *more of that family be infants*, and cannot be ſaid to *join expreſſly in it*. An inſtance of this we have in St. *Matthew*, where our Saviour miraculouſly fed the multitude; which, he tells us, conſiſted of *little children*, as well as men and women, and yet that multitude is ſaid without exception to *wonder, and to glorify the God of Iſrael.*§ With regard to *Stephanus*'s family, if ſome were baptiz'd in their infantile ſtate, (i. e.) before they were capable of being taught or of

§ Matt. xv. ver. 31.

of believing, yet between the time of their baptiſm, and the date of this epiſtle of St. *Paul*, wherein this circumſtance is related, they might perhaps be able to *addict themſelves to the miniſtry of the ſaints*; for there was the ſpace of five, if not ſeven years, between the one and the other. The ſame Apoſtle tells us by implication, that he follow'd the cuſtom of the *Jews* in the adminiſtring baptiſm, when he tells them, that he had *committed nothing againſt the cuſtoms of their fathers*,* for if he obſerv'd all the innocent *cuſtoms* of the *Jews*, he certainly *baptiz'd* all Proſelites, men, women and their children,

* Acts. chap. xxviii. ver. 17.

children, as the *Jews* were wont to do.

That this was the practice of the Apoſtles, will farther appear from their epiſtolary writings, and from the writings of the primitive fathers of the church. The moſt remarkable paſſage upon this ſubject we find in the firſt epiſtle to the *Corinthians* (chap. vii. ver. 14.) *The unbelieving huſband is ſanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is ſanctified by her huſband; elſe were your children unclean, but now they are holy.* The Apoſtle in the two preceeding verſes is adviſing againſt the ſeparation of man and wife, ſhould either of them be heathen: And in this verſe he gives

gives the reaſon for it; becauſe it has been known that the heathen huſband *hath been ſanctified*, (ſo it ought to be rendered) i. e. brought over to the faith of Chriſt by the chriſtian wife, and the heathen wife by the chriſtian huſband; *elſe were your children unclean*, i. e. incapable of entering into the chriſtian covenant, but *now are they holy*, i. e. capable of it. That this is the ſenſe of St. *Paul*, is evident from the reaſon he gives for this cohabitation; for if he meant only to ſecure the legitimacy of their children, he had no occaſion to urge the *ſanctification* of the parents as a reaſon; for their legitimacy would be the ſame, whether

whether their parents were ſanctified or not. Beſides, the words the Apoſtle makes uſe of to expreſs this uncleanneſs by, ſhew that he did not mean baſtardy; for where he ſpeaks of baſtards, he calls them baſtards;‡ but the children in this place, he ſtyles, unclean children. But to determine more preciſely the ſenſe of this word, it may be uſeful to examine a few more particulars. St. *Peter*, after the *viſion of unclean beaſts*, (which was to prepare him for it) meets *Cornelius*, *and as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together. And he ſaid unto them, ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for*

‡ Hebr. chap. xii. ver. 8.

for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one that is of another nation; but God hath ſhew'd me that I ſhould not call any man common or unclean. When Peter was come up to Jeruſalem, they that were of the circumciſion contended with him; ſaying, thou wenteſt into men uncircumcis'd.† Here 'tis plain to be *unclean* is to be *uncircumcis'd.* In the Old Teſtament *unclean* and *uncircumcis'd* are often uſed as ſynonimous terms; *ye ſhall count the fruit thereof, as uncircumcis'd; three years ſhall it be uncircumcis'd to you.*§ When *Joſhua circumcis'd the chilaren*

† Acts, chap. x. ver. 25, 27, 28; and Acts chap. xi. ver 2, 3.

§ Levit. xix. ver. 23.

children of Iſrael, the *Septuagint* ſay, he *cleanſed* the children of Iſrael,† on the contrary the *circumciſed* are called an *holy ſeed*; and the offspring from them, and from thoſe Proſelities which had embrac'd their religion are ſaid to be *born in Holineſs*, i. e. *fit to be admitted to circumciſion*.‖ In the forecited place in *Leviticus*, *holy* is ſubſtituted inſtead of *circumciſed*, upon dropping the Metaphor; *in the fourth year all the fruit ſhall be holy*. The Apoſtles argument therefore, or the conſequence of it is this. As the children of *heathen* parents are *unclean*,

† Joſh. chap. v. ver. 4.

‖ Iſaiah, chap. vi. ver. 13, and Ezra. chap. ix. ver. 2.

unclean, i. e. incapable of circumciſion, but the children of *Jewiſh* parents are *holy*, i. e. capable of circumciſion; ſo the children of *heathen* parents are *unclean*, i. e. incapable of chriſtian baptiſm; but the children of *chriſtian* parents are *holy*, i. e. capable of chriſtian baptiſm. 'Tis remarkable that the ſame apoſtle, when he ſpeaks of baptiſm, takes frequent occaſion to allude to circumciſion; and in one place calls baptiſm *the circumciſion of Chriſt*.‡

The earlieſt fathers unanimouſly declare, that it was the practice of the church in their time to baptize infants. The moſt

‡ Coloſſ. chap. ii. ver. 11,

moſt ancient writer we have, is *Clemens Romanus*, who liv'd in the days of the Apoſtles: and he, in effect, ſays, that infants have need of baptiſm; for he ſays, *children are born in ſin, and muſt be regenerated*, (a term as us'd by the fathers always ſignifying to be baptiz'd) *before they can be capable of the kingdom of Heaven.** An ancient book ſtyl'd *Hermas*, written about the ſame time with *Clemens*, ſays, *before a man receives the name of the ſon of* God, *he is ordained to death; but when he receives that ſeal he is freed from death, and aſſign'd unto life. Now that ſeal is the water of baptiſm.*

* Clem. Rom. Ep. 1 ad Corinth. 11, 17.

tiſm.† And he argues upon the ſame principles with *Clemens, except one be born of water, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* Another ancient writer, who liv'd in the ſecond century, was *Juſtin Martyr*, who ſpeaks plainly of Infant-baptiſm as in uſe from the times of the Apoſtles. He ſays, *there were among the chriſtians in his time many perſons of both ſexes, ſome ſixty, ſome ſeventy years of age, who had been made Diſciples from their infancy to Chriſt*, (which expreſſion by the by ſhews that to baptize, was to Diſciple.) Now *Juſtin* wrote this apology about the year 148; and therefore thoſe he ſpeaks of as baptiz'd

† Herm. Paſt. Simil. ix, &, 16.

baptiz'd in their infancy, muſt have been baptiz'd in the firſt age, while ſome of the Apoſtles were yet living. In another place, he proves the neceſſity of baptiſm from theſe words of our Saviour; *except one be born of water, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.*‡ In his dialogue with *Trypho* he ſpeaks of original ſin, which conſequentially proves that he held the neceſſity of Infant-baptiſm. In another place of the ſame dialogue he draws a parallel between baptiſm and circumciſion.* The book called the *Recognitions or the travels of St. Peter*, tho' the

‡ Juſtin. Apol. 2. prope ab Initio. ibid. p. 94.

* Dialog. cum Tryphone, p. 315.—p. 59.

the author be not known, is allow'd to be as ancient as *Juſtin Matyr*; and the author of it argues upon the ſame principles with the forecited writers; making baptiſm neceſſary to purge away original ſin; which is a way of arguing that makes baptiſm neceſſary for infants, ſince they cannot enter the kingdom of God, till that ſin is done away by the waters of baptiſm.‖ Next comes *Irenæus*, who was born in the latter end of the firſt century, and liv'd to a great old age; both which circumſtances contribute to make him a competent judge of the practice of the church; and he ſays, *that the*

‖ Recogn. L. 6. n. 9. p. 551.

the church then held original ſin, that baptiſm only could purge it away, and that infants for that reaſon were admitted to it.---That Chriſt came to ſave all perſons who by him are regenerated to God; infants, and little ones, &c.† Towards the latter end of the ſecond, and in the beginning of the third century, liv'd *Tertullian*; who, tho' he wrote his book *de baptiſmo* after he turn'd *Montaniſt*, and has given us ſome odd notions about the matter, argues in ſuch a way as plainly ſhews it was the practice of the church in his time to admit infants to baptiſm: and when he argues againſt the

† Irenæus L. 5. c. 19. Id. L. 2. c. 39.

practice himſelf, he goes upon ſuppoſition that there is no danger of death; for otherwiſe he pleads as ſtrenuouſly as any body for the neceſſity of it.‡ *Origen*, who liv'd in the beginning of the third century, argues for the doctrine of original ſin from the practice of the church to baptize infants; for he aſks *why the church admits them to baptiſm, if they have no ſins to be remitted, and if they have any, they muſt be original ſins?* In another place, he argues from theſe words of Chriſt, *except one be born of water*, &c. for the neceſſity of Infant-baptiſm, ſo making it a divine inſtitution; and

‡ Tertull. de Baptiſmo. c. 18.

and in another place an apoſtolical tradition; for he expreſſly affirms that *the church receiv'd the order of baptizing infants from the Apoſtles* † In the middle of the third century liv'd *Cyprian*, to whom it was referr'd to ſettle a point then agitated relating to the time of baptizing infants; for one *Fidus*, an *African* biſhop, ſent a query to him, whether infants might be baptiz'd before the eighth day, according to the law of circumciſion; to which queſtion *Cyprian*, and a council of ſixty-ſix biſhops returned this anſwer. *It was their unanimous*

 reſolution

† Orig. Hom. 8. in Levit. Id. Hom. 14. in Luc. Id. in Rom. L. 5.

reſolution and judgement, that the mercy and grace of God is to be denied to none as ſoon as he is born.‡

It is needleſs to ſwell this diſcourſe with authorities below this date; if infant baptiſm was in practice in theſe earlieſt and pureſt ages, as I hope I have ſhewn it was, no ſubſequent writers can make the point more clear; and if we had not teſtimonies of this ancient date, all later writers could ſay, would have but little weight: but as it now ſtands recorded by apoſtolical men for apoſtolical practice, I hope every one will be as fully convinc'd as

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‡ Cypr. Epiſt. 59. al. 64. ad Fidum. p. 158.

I am myſelf, that infant baptiſm was apoſtolical practice. But as men differ about the mode, as well as the ſubjects of baptiſm, I will endeavour to give all the ſatisfaction, I am able, upon that point, before I conclude this diſcourſe. As the ſcriptures are ſo far ſilent as to the mode of baptiſm, as to give us no explanatory account of it, we can come at the knowledge of it no way, but by the word which contains the order to perform it; and that word is *baptize*; about which learned men § are much divided as to its primary ſenſe; ſome

§ Heyſchius, Stephanus, Budæus, Scapula, Voſſius, Spanhemius, Dr. Gale, &c.

contending that it ſignifies no more than *ablution or waſhing*, others that it ſignifies *dipping* or *plunging under water*; which of them are in the right I ſhall not take upon me to determine, becauſe it is really not material; as nothing can be concluded from its litteral ſenſe againſt its being us'd in a figurative; for unleſs it is a word that will not admit of a figurative ſenſe of which ſort ſcarce any word is, or is a word never us'd once in ſcripture in a figurative ſenſe, its litteral meaning cannot determine the point. That it is us'd in a figurative ſenſe in ſcripture, a few inſtances will ſuffice to ſhew. *When they come from the*

the market, except they waſh, they eat not, and many other things there be, which they have received to hold as the waſhing of cups, and pots, braſen veſſels, and of tables, (or beds) Here the ſame words are uſed in the original for *waſhing* in both places, as ſignify *to baptize*, and *baptiſm*; and if it means *plunging under water*, when applied to *waſhing hands, cups, pots, and braſen veſſels*, I ſuppoſe no body will think it ſignifies more than *common waſhing*, when apply'd to *tables* or *beds* the Jews eat upon. I ſay, upon ſuppoſition that *to dip under water* is the primary ſenſe of the word *baptize*, it is here uſed, when applied to tables, in a figu-

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rative. But one would be apt to ſuſpect that its primary ſenſe is only to *waſh*, or elſe that it is uſed throughout this verſe in a figurative, it being not uſual in the ſame breath, as it were, to ſkip from one ſenſe to the other. *Are ye able to drink of the cup that I ſhall drink of, and to be baptiz'd with the baptiſm that I am baptiz'd with*;† i. e. ſuffer what I ſuffer. This inſtance muſt be allow'd to be remote enough from the litteral ſenſe of the word, let it be *plunging under water*, or *ſimple waſhing*. *John truly baptiz'd with water, but ye ſhall be baptiz'd*

† Matt. chap. xx. ver. 22.

baptiz'd with the Holy Ghoſt not many days hence.† Here again *baptize* in the ſecond place, does not ſignify to *dip under water*. To trace its meaning in this place, will perhaps let in great light upon the preſent queſtion. After the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, the Apoſtles *began to ſpeak with other tongues*; upon this the multitude that heard them were amaz'd, and began to make many unnatural and ſcandalous conjectures about the cauſe of it. *Peter* takes upon him to ſilence them, which he does by referring them to one of their own prophets, as if he had ſaid, this is

† Acts, chap. i. ver. 5.

is what ye might have expected; for, *this is that which was ſpoken by the prophet Joel, and it ſhall come to paſs in the laſt days, ſaith God, I will pour out of my ſpirit upon all fleſh, and on my ſervants, and on my Handmaidens I will pour out in thoſe days of my ſpirit,* † Here God's *baptizing* the apoſtles with the Holy Ghoſt, and God's *pouring his ſpirit* upon them, have exactly the ſame ſignification; and therefore *baptize* and *pour out* are ſynominous, and can imply nothing more than perfuſion. From theſe inſtances it appears that the word *baptize* did

† Acts, chap. 11, ver. 4, 7, 13, 16, 17, 18.

did not of itſelf confine the apoſtles to *dipping*, but left them at liberty to *pour water*, or *ſprinkle water* in the adminiſtration of baptiſm. I deny not but *John Baptiſt* might baptize his Diſciples by *dipping them under water*, and that *Philip* might baptize the *Eunuch* after the ſame manner, but I contend, as baptiſm ſignified perfuſion, as well as immerſion, that neither mode was ſo eſſential to the ſacrament of baptiſm, but that either of them might be uſed; and eſpecially in cales of great exigency. Accordingly, I think it probable, that the jailor and his family, as their convertion was

ſudden,

ſudden, and time ſhort, they were not provided with a ſufficient quantity of water, or a convenient receptacle for *dipping*, and therefore were baptiz'd by *perfuſion* or *ſprinkling*. Neither do I deny that the primitive fathers baptiz'd by *aipping*, but I do aſſert that they did not think this particular mode eſſential to baptiſm; for they frequently in caſes of ſickneſs, baptiz'd by *perfuſion* or *ſprinkling*.

But be the matter how it will, there lies no juſt exception to the church of *England* on this account, For her Rubric ſays, if the ſponſors ſhall certify that the child may well endure it, the

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miniſter ſhall dip it in the water diſcretely and warily, that if they certify that the child is weak, it ſhall ſuffice to pour water upon it.

It may perhaps be objected to this diſcourſe, that the ſubject has been exhauſted by much abler pens than the author's, and that therefore it is quite unneceſſary to revive the controverſy, or to add any thing in favour of the ſide of the queſtion he eſpouſes: For where buildings are compleat, no prop is wanting. To the firſt part of this objection, the author ſubmits with moſt perfect reſignation; but the concluſion drawn from it he denies: for whoever is converſant in church-hiſtory, muſt

muſt know that all religious controverſies have had their rotations, and have been repeatedly reviv'd and ſilenced by different writers at the different periods of their appearance, and that this has been the fate of Infant-Baptiſm among the reſt. Not to ranſack antiquity for the proof of this, I ſhall inſtance only in what has happen'd in the preſent century. In the year 1705 and 1720, Mr. *Wall* publiſhed his *Hiſtory*, and excellent *defence of Infant-baptiſm*, which for a time put to ſilence the Antipædobaptiſts. But tho' this conqueſt was ſo lately made, yet their teachers ſwagger in the field, as if they had been always triumphant, preſuming that

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his arguments againſt them are now a'days never read, or are forgotten.

It has been ſaid, that he who gives the laſt blow, gains the victory; but from ſome accidental cauſes, this does not hold good in controverſy. For one man will fall in love with a queſtion, and will not read any faults that are found in it. Another will grow weary of a queſtion, and will not trouble himſelf about the anſwer to it. In ſhort, paſſion, idolence, prejudice and intereſt, blind men's eyes, and ſtop their progreſs in the purſuit of truth. But notwithſtanding their diſcouragements, no dangerous doctrines,

whether

whether new or old in religion ſhould paſs unanſwered, leaſt ſilence ſhou'd be conſtrued a ſurrender.

I do not charge our preſent anabaptiſts with the wicked tenets and practices of their German friends, before and after they came into England; but I know not how to acquit them of enthuſiaſm: Unleſs they can account for their chuſing illiterate men to be their teachers, by taking them from the forge or the plough, without it. For can it be thought, that theſe implements are proper furniture for the ſchools of the prophets, or that clowniſh ignorance is a becoming ingredient to form a preacher of the goſpel? unleſs

unleſs it be ſuppoſed that they are afterwards divinely inſpired. Our bleſſed Saviour it is true, made choice of ignorant and illiterate men to be his followers; but it is clear from the hiſtory of the New Teſtament they did not dare to preach, but as *the ſpirit gave them utterance*. To ſhew his miraculous power, God choſe *the fooliſh things of the world to confound the wiſe*, and an amazing proof it was of it. But the ſame fooliſhneſs unaſſiſted from above, wou'd now make a deſpicable figure in a diſputation with a philoſopher; but inſpirations and their occaſions have long ceaſed, and nothing but heated imagination will pretend

to, or believe in ſuch gifts. Moſt other proteſtant diſſenters are more careful in the education of their miniſters, they have academies, and learned men to inſtruct them in human and divine knowledge, well knowing how neceſſary it is to make an able divine.

But after all, leaving out learning (which ſeems to be abſolutely neceſſary to form an able miniſtry) and ſuppoſing it doubtful from ſome texts of ſcripture, whether it was our Saviour's will that infants ſhou'd be baptized, yet the ſafeſt way muſt be to do it; becauſe infants can receive no injury from it, and the ſcrupuloſity of the church, and their parents

can

can give no offence to God. Whereas on the other hand, if it was our Saviour's will that infants ſhou'd be baptized, the neglect of it muſt be injurious to them, by leaving them out of the covenant, and the boldneſs and preſumption of their miniſters or parents offenſive in the ſight of God. But the caſe is by no means doubtful, as I hope I have ſhewn in this diſcourſe, and nothing but an expreſs command to the contrary can juſtify the omiſſion of it.

FINIS.

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